Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A valve comprising: a deformable member, said deformable member having a fluid passage extending therethrough, and a normally-closed opening within said passage arranged such that it can be opened by external pressure applied to said deformable member; and an external member displaceable on and separate from said deformable member with respect to said deformable member between a first position at which said external member can be released and in which said opening through said deformable member remains substantially closed and a second position in which said opening is opened and remains open when said external member is released even in the absence of any member extending within said passage.

2. (Original) A valve according to Claim 1, wherein said external member is arranged to remain in said first or second position until manual force is applied to displace it to the other position.

3. (Original) A valve according to Claim 1, wherein said external member is a collar embracing said deformable member.

4. (Original) A valve according to Claim 1, wherein said external member is displaceable by sliding lengthwise of said passage.

5. (Original) A valve according to Claim 1, wherein said first position is located to one side of said opening and said second position is substantially aligned with said opening.

6. (Original) A valve according to Claim 1 including a rigid housing externally of said deformable member and wherein a part of said deformable member projects outwardly through an opening in said rigid housing for engagement by said external member.

7. (Original) A valve according to Claim 1, wherein said deformable member has a part with an inclined surface arranged for engagement by said external member.

8. (Original) A valve according to Claim 6, wherein said housing has two openings located diametrically opposite one another, wherein said deformable member has two pads projecting outwardly through respective ones of said openings, and wherein said pads each have an inclined external surface shaped for engagement by said external member such that displacement of said external member causes said pads to be pushed inwardly towards one another thereby opening said opening.

9. (Original) A valve according to Claim 1, wherein said normally-closed opening is a slit extending diametrically of said passage.

10. (Original) A valve according to Claim 9, wherein said deformable member is generally tubular and has a transverse web extending across its diameter and formed integrally with said deformable member, and wherein said slit is provided in said web.

11. (Original) A valve according to Claim 9 including a substantially rigid reinforcement member extending parallel to said slit on opposite sides such that when a force is applied externally along said slit said reinforcement member is bowed outwardly to open said slit.

12. (Original) A valve comprising: a deformable member having a fluid passage extending therethrough; an internal seal of a deformable material defining a slit extending transversely of said fluid passage; and a substantially rigid reinforcement member extending parallel to said slit on opposite sides such that when a force is applied externally along said slit said reinforcement member is bowed outwardly to open said slit.

13. (Currently amended) A valve comprising: a tubular deformable member, said deformable member having a fluid passage extending therethrough, a closure member extending across said fluid passage and having a normally-closed slit arranged such that

said slit can be opened by external pressure applied to said tubular member; and an external collar slidable along said tubular member between a first position in which said slit remains substantially closed when the collar is released and a second position in which said slit is opened and remains open when the collar is released even in the absence of any member extending within said passage.

14. (Original) A valve according to Claim 13 including an outer rigid housing having openings therein, wherein said tubular member has two projecting pads located at opposite sides and aligned with ends of said slit, and wherein said collar is slidable along said housing to engage said pads through said openings in said second position so as to apply pressure to said tubular member along the length of said slit and thereby open said slit.

15. (Currently amended) A closed system suction catheter assembly comprising a suction catheter and a valve, said valve comprising: a deformable member, said deformable member having a fluid passage extending therethrough, and a normally-closed opening within said passage arranged such that it can be opened by external pressure applied to said deformable member; and an external member displaceable on ans separate from said deformable member with respect to said deformable member between a first position at which said external member can be released and in which said opening through said deformable member remains substantially closed and a second position in which said opening is opened and remains open when said external member is released even in the absence of any member extending within said passage.

16. (Original) An assembly according to Claim 15 including a cleaning chamber located towards a patient end of said assembly, wherein said valve is located towards a patient side of said cleaning chamber, and wherein said valve is openable to allow extension of said suction catheter and is closable substantially to isolate said cleaning chamber from the patient and enable cleaning of said catheter.

17. (Original) An assembly according to Claim 15, wherein said valve is located towards a machine end of said assembly and is connected at a machine end of said suction catheter so as to enable or prevent suctioning along said catheter.

18. (Currently amended) A closed system suction catheter assembly comprising: a suction catheter, a machine end fitting including a suction control valve arranged to control suction applied to said catheter, a patient end fitting having a sliding seal through which said suction catheter can be advanced and retracted, and a flexible envelope extending between said machine end fitting and said patient end fitting and enclosing said catheter between said fittings, wherein said patient end fitting includes a cleaning chamber on a patient side of said sliding seal, said cleaning chamber including an inlet for cleaning fluid and a valve, and wherein said valve includes a tubular deformable member, said deformable member having a fluid passage extending therethrough, a closure member extending across said fluid passage and having a slit normally closed to isolate said cleaning chamber from the patient; and an external collar slidable along said tubular member with respect to said tubular member between a first position in which said slit remains substantially closed when the collar is released and a second position in which said collar applies pressure to said tubular member to open said slit and said slit remains open when the collar is released to allow the catheter to be advanced from said cleaning chamber <u>even in the absence of any member extending within said passage</u>.